IN THE CLAIMS:

1.-8. (canceled)

9. (currently amended) A method of assembling a constant velocity universal ball joint comprising:

providing an outer joint part (11) with outer ball tracks (15), an inner joint part (12) with inner ball tracks (16), torque transmitting balls (13) guided in pairs of tracks comprising one of said outer ball tracks (15) and one of said inner ball tracks (16), and an annular ball cage (17) held between the outer joint part (11) and the inner joint part (12) and having circumferentially distributed cage windows (18) each receiving one of the balls (13), the ball cage (17) comprising an inner face (23) which is internally widened between two end apertures (21, 22) of the ball cage, the end apertures (21, 22) defining an inner diameter (d_1), the inner joint part (12) defining an outer diameter (d_2) which is greater than the inner diameter (d_1) of the end apertures (21, 22) of the ball cage, and wherein adjoining inner ball tracks (16) of the inner joint part (12) form webs (27) whose axial length (x) is greater than a circumferential extension (y) of the cage windows (18) of the ball cage (17)[[, and]];

~~wherein~~ elastically ovalising the ball cage (17); and ~~is elastically ovalisable such that,~~

when respective axes of the ball cage (17) and of the inner joint part (12) intersect one another approximately perpendicularly upon contact between a web (27_1) of the inner joint part (12) and the inner face (23) of the ball cage (17), passing an opposed web (27_2) of the inner joint part (12) ~~is able to pass~~ through an end aperture (21, 22).

10. (currently amended) A ~~joint~~ method according to claim 9, wherein the ball cage (17) is elastically ovalised such that, when respective axes of the

ball cage (17) and of the inner joint part (12) intersect one another approximately perpendicularly, the inner joint part (12) is able, by way of a smallest side projection diameter (d_5), to pass through an end aperture (21, 22) of the ball cage.

11. (currently amended) A ~~joint~~ method according to claim 9, wherein the ball cage (17) is elastically ovalised such that, when respective axes of the ball cage (17) and of the inner joint part (12) intersect one another approximately perpendicularly, the inner joint part (12) is able, by way of the inner diameter (d_1), to pass through the end aperture (21, 22) of the ball cage.

12. (currently amended) ~~A joint according to claim 9 comprising~~ A constant velocity universal ball joint comprising:

an outer joint part (11) with outer ball tracks (15), an inner joint part (12) with inner ball tracks (16), torque transmitting balls (13) guided in pairs of tracks comprising one of said outer ball tracks (15) and one of said inner ball tracks (16), and an annular ball cage (17) held between the outer joint part (11) and the inner joint part (12) and having circumferentially distributed cage windows (18) each receiving one of the balls (13), the ball cage (17) comprising an inner face (23) which is internally widened between two end apertures (21, 22) of the ball cage, the end apertures (21, 22) defining an inner diameter (d_1), the inner joint part (12) defining an outer diameter (d_2) which is greater than the inner diameter (d_1) of the end apertures (21, 22) of the ball cage, and

wherein adjoining inner ball tracks (16) of the inner joint part (12) form webs (27) whose axial length (x) is greater than a circumferential extension (y) of the cage windows (18) of the ball cage (17), and

wherein the ball cage (17) is elastically ovalisable such that, when respective axes of the ball cage (17) and of the inner joint part (12) intersect one another approximately perpendicularly upon contact between a web (27_1) of the inner joint part

(12) and the inner face (23) of the ball cage (17), an opposed web (27_2) of the inner joint part (12) is able to pass through an end aperture (21, 22); and

wherein the joint comprises a longitudinally extending deepened groove (29) in a track base of at least one inner ball track (16) of the inner joint part (12).

13. (currently amended) A joint according to claim ~~10 comprising a longitudinally extending deepened groove (29) in a track base of at least one inner ball track (16) of the inner joint part (12)~~ 12, wherein the ball cage (17) is elastically ovalised such that, when respective axes of the ball cage (17) and of the inner joint part (12) intersect one another approximately perpendicularly, the inner joint part (12) is able, by way of a smallest side projection diameter (d_5), to pass through an end aperture (21, 22) of the ball cage.

14. (currently amended) A joint according to claim ~~11 comprising a longitudinally extending deepened groove (29) in a track base of at least one inner ball track (16) of the inner joint part (12)~~ 12, wherein the ball cage (17) is elastically ovalised such that, when respective axes of the ball cage (17) and of the inner joint part (12) intersect one another approximately perpendicularly, the inner joint part (12) is able, by way of the inner diameter (d_1), to pass through the end aperture (21, 22) of the ball cage.

15. (currently amended) ~~A joint according to claim 9 comprising~~ A constant velocity universal ball joint comprising:

an outer joint part (11) with outer ball tracks (15), an inner joint part (12) with inner ball tracks (16), torque transmitting balls (13) guided in pairs of tracks comprising one of said outer ball tracks (15) and one of said inner ball tracks (16), and an annular ball cage (17) held between the outer joint part (11) and the inner joint part (12) and having circumferentially distributed cage windows (18) each receiving one of the balls (13), the ball cage (17) comprising an inner face (23) which is internally

widened between two end apertures (21, 22) of the ball cage, the end apertures (21, 22) defining an inner diameter (d_1), the inner joint part (12) defining an outer diameter (d_2) which is greater than the inner diameter (d_1) of the end apertures (21, 22) of the ball cage, and

wherein adjoining inner ball tracks (16) of the inner joint part (12) form webs (27) whose axial length (x) is greater than a circumferential extension (y) of the cage windows (18) of the ball cage (17), and

wherein the ball cage (17) is elastically ovalisable such that, when respective axes of the ball cage (17) and of the inner joint part (12) intersect one another approximately perpendicularly upon contact between a web (27_1) of the inner joint part (12) and the inner face (23) of the ball cage (17), an opposed web (27_2) of the inner joint part (12) is able to pass through an end aperture (21, 22); and

wherein the joint comprises a centrally circumferentially extending deepened groove (24) in the inner face (23) of the ball cage (17).

16. (currently amended) A joint according to claim ~~10 comprising a centrally circumferentially extending deepened groove (24) in the inner face (23) of the ball cage (17)~~ 15, wherein the ball cage (17) is elastically ovalised such that, when respective axes of the ball cage (17) and of the inner joint part (12) intersect one another approximately perpendicularly, the inner joint part (12) is able, by way of a smallest side projection diameter (d_5), to pass through an end aperture (21, 22) of the ball cage.

17. (currently amended) A joint according to claim ~~11 comprising a centrally circumferentially extending deepened groove (24) in the inner face (23) of the ball cage (17)~~ 15, wherein the ball cage (17) is elastically ovalised such that, when respective axes of the ball cage (17) and of the inner joint part (12) intersect one another approximately perpendicularly, the inner joint part (12) is able, by way of the inner diameter (d_1), to pass through the end aperture (21, 22) of the ball cage.

18. (previously presented) A joint according to claim 12 comprising a centrally circumferentially extending deepened groove (24) in the inner face (23) of the ball cage (17).

19. (currently amended) A ~~joint~~ method according to claim 9 comprising providing a notch in a widened end portion (19, 20) of an inner ball track (16) of the inner joint part, said notch extending centrally relative to a longitudinal extension of the track.

20. (previously presented) A joint according to claim 12 comprising a notch in a widened end portion (19, 20) of an inner ball track (16) of the inner joint part, said notch extending centrally relative to a longitudinal extension of the track.

21. (previously presented) A joint according to claim 15 comprising a notch in a widened end portion (19, 20) of an inner ball track (16) of the inner joint part, said notch extending centrally relative to a longitudinal extension of the track.

22. (previously presented) A joint according to claim 18 comprising a notch in a widened end portion (19, 20) of an inner ball track (16) of the inner joint part, said notch extending centrally relative to a longitudinal extension of the track.

23. (currently amended) A ~~joint~~ method according to claim 9 wherein the joint is a counter track joint wherein pairs of tracks of first outer ball tracks (15_1) and of first inner ball tracks (16_1) open in a first axial direction, and wherein pairs of tracks of second outer ball tracks (15_2) and of second inner ball tracks (16_2) open in the second axial direction.

24. (previously presented) A joint according to claim 12 wherein the joint is a counter track joint wherein pairs of tracks of first outer ball tracks (15_1) and of first inner ball tracks (16_1) open in a first axial direction, and wherein pairs of tracks of second outer ball tracks (15_2) and of second inner ball tracks (16_2) open in the second axial direction.

25. (previously presented) A joint according to claim 15 wherein the joint is a counter track joint wherein pairs of tracks of first outer ball tracks (15_1) and of first inner ball tracks (16_1) open in a first axial direction, and wherein pairs of tracks of second outer ball tracks (15_2) and of second inner ball tracks (16_2) open in the second axial direction.

26. (previously presented) A joint according to claim 18 wherein the joint is a counter track joint wherein pairs of tracks of first outer ball tracks (15_1) and of first inner ball tracks (16_1) open in a first axial direction, and wherein pairs of tracks of second outer ball tracks (15_2) and of second inner ball tracks (16_2) open in the second axial direction.

27. (currently amended) A ~~joint~~ method according to claim 9 wherein the joint is a fixed joint, wherein inner annular faces of the inner face (23) of the ball cage (17) are in centering contact with outer faces (28) of the inner joint part (12).

28. (previously presented) A joint according to claim 18 wherein the joint is a fixed joint, wherein inner annular faces of the inner face (23) of the ball cage (17) are in centering contact with outer faces (28) of the inner joint part (12).